

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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## SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

**MAXIMUM ON BREAD.**—The recent attempts which have been made to compel the London Bakers to sell their bread at a price lower than they assert they can afford to sell it at, seem likely to lead to some *legislative measure* for putting an end to the scandalous strife.—In my last I gave my opinion pretty fully on the nature and effects of the assize on bread, which is a real *maximum*, give it what name you wilt, seeing that it does not leave the proprietor of bread to fix his own price, or, to refuse to sell, for ready money, his bread at the price fixed on by the magistrates, who have the authority to settle the assize.—The bakers have, it seems, made a remonstrance on the subject, an account of which, as I find it in the *Morning Chronicle*, I shall here insert, first observing, that the Lord Mayor of London, Mr. SCHOLEY, threatened, as it appears, to fix the price according to the average price of *wheat*, and not, as usual, according to the average price of *flour*.—The custom is to require, from certain officers of the City, an account weekly of the average price of flour. When the Lord Mayor has this account, he fixes the price of bread for the ensuing week, in a certain proportion to the price of flour during the last week.—I have, in my last, shown, I think, very clearly, that this can be of no real use to the community; and, it will not be difficult to show, that it must be a real injury; but such is the custom.—Recently, the *flour* has not fallen in price so fast as the fall in the price of *wheat* seemed to the Lord Mayor to call for; and, therefore, it appears, that he had, at one time, resolved to fix the price of bread in proportion to the price of *wheat* and not of *flour*, which, as the reader must at once see, might have compelled the bakers to shut up their shops to avoid ruin, seeing that they make bread of *flour* and not of *wheat*, and seeing, that, in London, at least, they do not deal in wheat any more than they do in hops or in straw.—But, I will now insert the account of their remonstrance, reserving my farther remarks till the reader has gone through it.—“On

Monday at noon a deputation of five or six of the principal Bakers waited on Lord Sidmouth, and stated to his Lordship the apprehensions which they entertained from the unjust aspersions which were daily thrown on the trade, and the prejudice thereby excited against them personally. They represented their situation as every way distressing, since they were bound down to an excise which leaves to the fair trader a profit so small as to be unexampled in any other trade or calling in the kingdom. And at the same time they were threatened by the Chief Magistrate to have their excise settled by the price of wheat, an article in which they did not deal, and over the price of which they had no control. For every trespass, and for every misdemeanour committed by any one individual in the trade, there were ample and adequate laws in the hands of the police Magistrates, to punish him; instead of which, there seemed to be a cruel and most dangerous design of raising a hue and cry against the whole body in a mass, as if they were all corruptly and wickedly engaged in fraudulent artifices to enhance the price of bread. The noble Lord expressed his abhorrence at the base and vulgar attempts, which he owned he had seen in quarters, where a better sense of duty to the public peace ought to have prevailed. He believed that a more industrious body of men did not exist than the generality of the bakers, and he lamented that they were so ill requited for their labour.—They represented to his Lordship that considerable danger was to be apprehended to the peace of the metropolis, if the assize of bread should be actually set by the price of wheat, because they could not continue to supply their customers if a measure so oppressive should be attempted. Lord Sidmouth said, it was impossible for Government to interfere with the Magistrate whose duty it was to set the assize; but recommended them to represent the real circumstances of their situation to the Lord Mayor. He thanked them for the

“communication they had made, and assured them that he should take care to provide for the peace of the metropolis. — In the evening of the same day there was a Meeting of Master Bakers at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, which was attended by between six and seven hundred of the most respectable part of the body. The chair was taken by Mr. Barron, when they came to several resolutions, which our readers will find in their Advertisement in the front page of this paper. — Yesterday a deputation of them waited on the Lord Mayor, and made to him the same statement which they had laid before the Secretary of State. They represented that they had no means of contracting the price of flour — that they were not dealers in wheat — that they could not force down the price — nor could they be forced to carry on their trade to the certain and inevitable ruin of their families, which would be the case if the assize were to be set by the price of wheat instead of the price of flour. The cause of the temporary difference was well known to be a thing with which the bakers had nothing to do. There was a scarcity of flour in consequence of the shortness of water at this season for grinding; but certainly if the assize of bread had been through the course of his Lordship's mayoralty set by the price of wheat instead of the price of flour, the quartern loaf would have been 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. during the most pinching season of the year. The Lord Mayor said he was resolved to make the trial, however, of setting it by the price of wheat—the time was favourable for the experiment: potatoes and vegetables were plentiful, and it was better to do it now than at Christmas. They answered, that they would not be able to supply their customers, and that he must be responsible for the peace of the city. He replied, that he would take all the consequences on his own head.—The Master and Wardens of the Bakers' Company, attended by their Clerk, Mr. Smith, then waited on his Lordship to get the assize set. The Lord Mayor declared his determination to set it by the price of wheat; they reasoned with him on the hardship, and said they would be incapable of supplying the metropolis with bread. He said he had not time to reason with them, as he must attend the Court of Aldermen. Mr. Smith then gave him formal notice that it was con-

trary to law, and that they could not comply with such an assize.—“What,” he said, “was it contrary to law, when the statute gave him the option?” They said it was contrary to the law as regulated and acted upon by the table of rules in his Court. In consequence of this, and because he was pressed for time, he adjourned the further consideration of the matter till three o'clock in the afternoon. He then proceeded to Guildhall, and here his Lordship consulted the Law Officers of the City as to the interpretation of the statute, and whether the assize so set would be binding on the bakers. He, no doubt, received prudent advice, for at three o'clock he fixed the assize of bread by the average price of flour.”

—Upon reading this article, one can hardly believe, that one is in a civilized country! That men should be really apprehensive of acts of violence committed upon themselves and houses from such a cause is wholly beyond the scope of our ordinary ideas.—But, who is it that has set up the “base and vulgar” cry against the bakers? Why, the London newspapers, and, chiefly, the news-papers attached to the cause of the ministry. This is the source of the base and vulgar cry upon this occasion, as it is the source of all the pernicious delusions by which the country is constantly misled. I gave, in my last, a specimen of this base and vulgar cry from the *Courier*; and when the poor, who have hardly a sufficiency of bread, are, by those who assume the epithet of the *loyal*, told, that the bakers are the cause of the high price, is it any wonder, if they are induced to commit acts of violence on the persons engaged in that trade? A woman was hanged last year for being the leader in seizing on a cart-load of potatoes, in order to cause the proprietor to lower the price of them. I have no scruple in saying, that those who, by the means of the press, endeavour to force the bakers to lower the price of their bread, deserve a severer punishment than that poor, ignorant, and, perhaps, half-famished, creature deserved. The former may be as ignorant as the latter; but, then, they carry on a profession, the very object of which is to have an influence on the minds of the people. They ought to know better; and they deserve punishment for misleading the ignorant in a matter so closely connected with the public peace and happiness.—The cause of the ignorance of these servile men taking this pernicious direction is explained





in few words.—They have a conceit, that *bread being cheap is a great blessing*.—This they take for an indisputable truth; and, therefore, I will stop to show, that there is room for great doubt even upon this point.—If a people, like some animals, were to live for only *one year*, and then cease to exist, there might be no room for a difference of opinion on the subject; because, to live and die with a belly full, would certainly be preferable to a life of half-hunger.—But, this is not the case. A people has to be provided for year after year; and, though the farmer (for such we will call the *grower of corn*) cannot have any control over the *seasons*, he must have a control over the *quantity of the crop*, as far as relates to the extent of land sown.—Now, for *bread to be cheap*, in proportion to other things, wheat must first sell at a *low price*; and, if wheat sell at a price which is looked upon as low, is it not evident, that a smaller quantity of land will be sown with wheat, than would have been sown with wheat, if that corn had brought a *high price*?—Do the wiseacres, who write in the *Courier*, imagine, that the farmer's sowings are not regulated by *price* as well as the weavings of the cotton spinner? Suppose a farmer to have 50 acres of land, which he *can* sow with wheat, with a tolerable chance of a crop, but 10 of which he would, in the ordinary course of things, not sow with wheat. If wheat brings a high price between harvest and February or March, he will, in all probability, sow the whole 50 acres with wheat; but, if the price of wheat in those months be *low*, he will assuredly not sow the 10 acres; and, of course, his crop will be smaller in amount.—Thus a year of *cheapness* may, and always will, cause a diminution in the next year's crop; and, of course, will cause more or less of *dearness* in the next year.—I shall be told, perhaps, that the farmer will sow the whole 50 acres with *something*, if not with wheat, and that, thus, the price of corn in *general* will be the same. But, this is not true. He will let some of his land lie fallow; he will not make the exertions that he would have made; he will not, in short, bestow so much capital on the land as he would have bestowed; he will employ his spare capital in some other way; it will be taken out of agriculture; and, of course, less corn will be grown.—So that, it seems to me to be a gross error to suppose, that the low price of corn and of bread is, in any year, an unqualified good, were we to stop here

in our view of the matter. But, here we must not stop; for the farmer has *rent* to pay, which, *if recently fixed*, requires a high price of corn; and, what is more material, the number of labourers require a certain *extent* of cultivation to keep them employed. If that extent be abridged, part of them will want employment, or their wages must be lowered. But, the effect would be double-handed: part of them would be unemployed, and those that were employed would work for less wages than they worked for before.—A moderate price is, for these reasons, best for all parties; and the exultations at the prospect of abundance and of low price, are amongst those ravings of political madness, with which this “most thinking people” are so frequently afflicted.—To return now to the *cause* of the ignorance of servile writers taking a direction so pernicious, it is this: they have a conceit that *bread being cheap is a great and positive blessing*; they, therefore, are always eager to see bread cheap; and, if it be so, they fail not to reckon the circumstance amongst the blessings which the country enjoys, *under the fostering hands of that government which it is their business to extol!*—Always, therefore, previous to the harvest you hear them announcing the approach of an abundant crop. Indeed, taking their cue from those conceited gentlemen, who draw up what are called the “*Monthly Agricultural Reports*,” and imitating the slang of these latter, they begin about the month of December, telling us, that “the early-sown *wheats* look very promising; that the late-sown *wheats* have been well got in; that the turnip-crops *spend well*; that the *rouen* on the *clovers* yield a prodigious quantity of *feed*; that fattening stock *come exceedingly well to the knife*,” and such like trash. Thus they go on from one harvest to another, with very little variation in either assertions or terms; so that, when the harvest is housed, and people find things pretty nearly the same price as before, no wonder that they are disappointed, and still less wonder is it, that these same deceivers should look about them for some set of persons on whom to throw the blame of the *failure of their predictions*.—The *sellers of bread* are the nearest to them; they are, unfortunately for them, the most visible to vulgar view; and, accordingly, upon them they fall.—Their language, though in a round about way, is, being compressed, this: “there was a plentiful, a most abundant, harvest; the ministers took care of us,

“and so did a kind Providence, who is on the side of the ministers; but these bakers and flour-dealers, by their “*malicious machinations*,” contrive to keep up the price of bread, in spite of all that has been done, both by wise ministers and a kind Providence.”—In times of real scarcity does there need any thing more to ensure the cutting of all the poor bakers’ throats? And, what shall we say, then, of this description of deceivers? This we may venture to say, that a more mischievous set of wretches never infested a country.—From the moment the corn is up, they begin to sow the seeds of disappointment and discontent; and aided, as I said before, by those conceited men, the Agricultural Reporters and their silly correspondents, they contrive, let the season and the harvest and the crop be what they may, to make the mass of the people grumble at the result; to make them believe, that, in some way or other, it is the *roguishness* of those, who have the raising and the preparing of the food, that causes it to be high in price. But, as the cur snaps at the *wheel* which hurts him, and not at the horses or the driver; so do these stupid men generally fall upon the *baker*, who, by no *possibility*, can, in the general run of his trade, gain by the high price of his commodity; while it is barely possible, that the *farmer* may; and, in pitching upon whom, therefore, they would, if possible, be rather less foolish and unjust. But as I said before, the farmer is not the person, with whom they come in immediate contact. The poor baker is the *wheel*, while the farmer, who is the *driver*, is at too great a distance to be much in danger of their senseless attacks.—Great as is the portion of the evil which is ascribable to those foolish and corrupt men, who have the press in their hands, aided by the agricultural reporters, still the main part of it certainly belongs to that relic of barbarism, the *assize of bread*, which, as I observed before, and as my title implies, is neither more nor less than a *maximum*, and which had its rise out of that set of barbarous notions, which produced the laws relative to *forestalling* and *regrating*, and which is coeval with a most firm and pious belief, in this country, that the house of “the *Mother of God*” took a flight over sea from Palestine to Loretto.—What is this *assize* in reality? what does it do? Why, it fixes, by law, the *price*, at which a certain description of men shall sell their property; while other laws fix the *quantity* and the *quality* of that property!—There only

wants one thing to complete the code: namely, a law to compel certain persons to carry on the trade of making and of vending bread. This would be a finishing stroke; but, as it is, the trade of a baker is rendered *odious* in the eyes of the unthinking part of the people; the very existence of a law, the professed object of which is to *prevent the bakers from practising extortion*, is a stigma upon the trade of a baker. The trade, too, is somewhat *perilous*. In times of real scarcity, the prejudices of the ignorant make it dangerous to be concerned in feeding them. These prejudices, which are countenanced by the existence of the *assize*, tend, therefore, to enhance the price of bread, which, without even the bakers themselves perceiving it, comes to the mouths of the people, loaded with a charge for *odium* and *risk*.—There is no sense in this regulation, unless you suppose the people, who eat bakers’ bread, to be so stupid as not to be able to distinguish bad bread from good, and light bread from heavy; and, if they really are so stupid, it matters very little whether they live or die.—If, indeed, bread were a thing, that people could not, at one glance, see the value of; if, like *hops*, for instance, it was a thing put into a bag, and that might be *plugged*, or *damped*, by a roguish vendor, to the great injury of the buyer, who might be months before it would be likely for him to discover the fraud; then, a law to punish the rascal might be passable; but, a loaf, good God! *a loaf!* it is eaten in half an hour after it is bought. Any badness in the quality or lightness in the weight may be ascertained in a moment; and would be ascertained in a very short time in the common course of things. Why, then, all this work about the *assize* of bread? why all these laws to protect the *bread-buyer*, and none to protect the *hop-buyer*?—Yes, there is a law to protect the *hop-buyer*. Any man, injured by a fraud, on the part of a *hop-seller*, whether by *plugging* or *damping* or by *counterfeit stamps*, or by any other means, may bring his *action of damages*. That is the remedy; and, why not leave *bread* to the usual course of the law?—Since I began this article, I have perceived, that there has been a discussion upon the subject of the *Price of Bread* in the London Common Council. I shall insert the Report of it below, and until I have time more fully to notice it, I beg leave to point it out for the reader’s perusal.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 6th Oct. 1813.



## PRICE OF BREAD.

A Court of Common Council was held on the 4th, at Guildhall, pursuant to a Requisition to the Lord Mayor, for the purpose of taking into consideration the present alarming and unprecedented high price of bread, notwithstanding an abundant and plentiful harvest. The Court having assembled, some preliminary business was transacted. Mr. Alderman C. Smith presented a Petition from the persons confined in the prison of Ludgate for debt, praying relief, which being read, after a division upon the question, was ordered to be referred to the Committee of City Lands, to examine the allegations of the said Petition, and report thereon to that Court. The Lord Mayor then communicated two letters to the Court, which he had received from Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Graham, and Sir Rowland Hill, acknowledging the thanks of that Court, as voted in July last, and communicated to them by the Lord Mayor. The letters were read, and respectively ordered to be entered on the Journals of the Court.

Another letter, from Mr. Serjeant Palmer, the Commissioner appointed under the Act of the 53d of his present Majesty for the relief of Insolvent Debtors, was then read, requesting from the Corporation of the City of London permission to use their Guildhall for the purpose of discharging the prisoners confined in the jails of the said city, pursuant to the provisions of that Act. After some little discussion, in which it was observed that the Commissioners of Bankruptcy met regularly on Tuesdays and Saturdays, while the Insolvent Act required that the Commissioner should sit from day to day, which might create some difficulty if the rooms occupied by the former were appropriated to the latter, it was agreed that such parts of Guildhall should be granted as the Lord Mayor might from time to time appoint.

The requisition being now read, Mr. GRIFFITHS opened the business for which the Court were assembled. He began by expressing his wish that it had fallen into other and better hands, as he had but little time to investigate the subject. He was perfectly of opinion, however, that the Act by which the Lord Mayor was to proceed in regulating the assize of Bread, was utterly inefficient, it had so many loop-holes, that designing men were sure to get out at some of them. He was well aware that the fault did not

lie with the bakers; they, indeed, were the injured men, though an unjust and cruel prejudice had been excited against them. Their profits were often much less than they were fairly entitled to, and he believed if they were allowed the benefit of a free competition in their trade, it would not only be better for themselves but also for the public. He had been a citizen of London half a century, and he was old enough to remember that within that period no baker had risen to the dignity of Lord Mayor, he believed, that no baker had ever found it necessary to buy off from serving the office of Sheriff; and, indeed, he doubted whether any baker had ever been drunk to by the Lord Mayor. In short, the bakers were an injured class of people, while the mealmen combined together to cheat the public. The whole evil lay among the mealmen, the millers, and the corn-factors. He would not detain them longer, but should submit a motion for the consideration of the Court, which he thought highly necessary at the present moment. The Worthy Member then moved, "That the Court of Aldermen be instructed to apply to Parliament for a Bill to revise and reduce into one Act the several Laws relating to the Assize of Bread; that they should consider the propriety of inserting a clause in that Act, to compel the corn-factor, the miller, and the mealman, to make a return to the Court of Aldermen of all the meal and flour bought and sold by them, in like manner as the bakers now do; and that a Committee be appointed, consisting of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, &c. to carry the same into effect."

Mr. HARPER seconded the motion.

Mr. S. DIXON said, that the Worthy Member who had framed the motion should at least have proved some circumstances to justify the Court in acceding to it. For his own part he was perfectly satisfied that there was no occasion for any such proceedings. He well remembered that all the measures which had, at different times, been taken in order to control the price of bread, had, unfortunately done more harm than good. It was impossible to force any commodity into sale at a price independent of the demand for it. It was contrary to the first principles of trade. When an article was plentiful, all the art of man could not make it high in price: when it was scarce, or likely to be scarce, all the art of man could not make persons sell it at less than they knew it would fetch. He hoped to hear no more of restrictive laws. Let

there be a fair competition, and he who sold the best commodity and the cheapest would have the most custom. There was one thing which ought not to be forgotten in this question. The drought this season had been remarkable, and many mills were prevented from working in consequence.

Mr. Alderman Wood said, that when he first heard of the intended requisition for calling the present Court, he was at a loss to conceive how any motion could be formed upon the subject to be submitted to them. And indeed no motion was before them, it was only a request, and to that request he had two objections. His first objection was, that as the motion seemed to imply something like an opinion that the Court of Aldermen had not discharged their duty, he could not accede to it, because no opportunity had been afforded by the Lord Mayor for the Court of Aldermen to act. During twenty-two weeks (he believed he was right in naming that period), in which the price of bread had remained stationary, no request had been made from the Lord Mayor to the Court of Aldermen, for their advice or assistance, though it had uniformly been the practice with all preceding Chief Magistrates of that city, in times of difficulty and embarrassment, to appeal to their Brother Aldermen. Had the present Lord Mayor done so? No: but when the period of the harvest arrived, then his Lordship had begun to take some decisive steps. He admitted that the harvest had been abundant beyond the example of many preceding years. He had himself been through many parts of Devonshire, and knew the fact from personal observation, and from the declarations of the farmers, who all concurred in expressing that opinion. But what was the fact with regard to flour? Could you force that commodity to be sold at a fixed price? It was impossible to do so, from a variety of causes. In many parts of the country, the mills could not work from the remarkable dryness of the season. In Suffolk, indeed, there were many tide mills; and so there were in the Isle of Wight, and the flour ground in those mills was constantly and regularly forwarded to the London Market, because the prices there were the highest. But this would not be the case, if the price in the London Market should be lower than elsewhere, and then how would the Metropolis be supplied? He remembered, that in Sir James Shaw's Mayoralty it had been attempted to fix the assize of bread by the average price of wheat, but it was found

impracticable then, and it ever would be found so. The bakers, in fact, would be ruined by such a regulation. Many persons were of opinion, and he was one of them, that it would be better to do away with the assize altogether. He would be told, perhaps, that as the matter now stood, any baker might sell his bread under the assize if he chose: but they who did so, were they not commonly reproached as undersellers, &c.? He was aware that he was taking the unpopular side of the question. He knew what popularity was. He had had his share of it, and was proud of it; but he would rather risk all the popularity he ever had or might have than do an act of injustice to so industrious and respectable a body of men as the bakers. Every other tradesman had the fair effects of competition open to him. Every other tradesman, if he gave credit, was enabled to fix such a price upon his commodity as was equivalent to the credit so given. But the baker, who was forced to give as long credit as the butcher, grocer, &c. was denied the power of increasing the price of his article by a single halfpenny. He contended, therefore, that the bakers were a class of people whose interests were peculiarly entitled to protection. In regulating the price of bread by the price of wheat, he would be glad to know what standard his Lordship would resort to? The market was very often supplied with low priced wheats, not intended to be ground into flour for the purpose of making wheaten bread. Would his Lordship take the average price of such wheats? As well might the clothiers be told, that because Spanish wool was now at such or such a price in the market, they should therefore sell their cloth accordingly. Nothing could be more absurd than such a notion. He was persuaded that if his Lordship had gone on with his system, if he had persevered in his declaration of fixing the assize of bread by the price of wheat, the bakers would not, indeed they could not, have baked a single loaf, and perhaps not a baker's house would be now standing. —The Worthy Member who made the motion had not said a word which should induce the Court to accede to it. No facts had been stated. He had affirmed, indeed, that the mealmen, cornfactors, &c. were combined together to rob the public. This was an unfair mode of attack upon a large and opulent body of men, unless he could point out some particulars to justify the assertion so broadly made. If Gentlemen would calmly consider the question,



they would see that those persons had no interest in carrying the prices to a height which must, in the end, make them losers; for flour could not always be at the same price as now, and if one or more mealmen would not bring their commodity to market, others would. It was, in short, impossible that such a combination as was spoken of, could exist: it would require a greater number of individuals of large capital than could be brought to act in concert, supposing them willing. Besides, there was a regular supply of the London Market from all parts of the country, which was sold immediately it came to market, as the factors had orders to dispose of it at the best price they could get. And who would blame such a proceeding? Had not every man a right to do so? Suppose a West-India fleet to sail, and only one out of nineteen vessels to reach this country, if that vessel were laden with a cargo of sugar, would not the owner of that cargo be justified in availing himself of the great demand in proportion to the supply, and get the highest price he could for his commodity? If the Court were anxious to do justice to themselves and their country, they would apply to Parliament to get rid of the assize altogether, and leave the baking-house open to the same competition as was enjoyed by other trades. He had weighed the subject well, and could not approve of the course which had been adopted, in lowering the price of bread, merely for the sake of a little paltry and trifling popularity.

The LORD MAYOR begged to be allowed to say a few words for himself, after what had fallen from the Worthy Alderman who had just sat down. The Worthy Alderman had urged it as a complaint against him (the Lord Mayor) that he had not mentioned this subject in the Court of Aldermen. That, however, was a mistake: he had repeatedly mentioned the subject in the Court of Aldermen, and if the Worthy Alderman had been in his place, he must have known that he had done so. There was another thing which had fallen from the Worthy Alderman, which he confessed he was surprised to hear—namely, that Sir William Curtis had given it as his opinion, that it would be for the public interest that the assize of bread were entirely done away. Every one who knew Sir William Curtis must agree that when he did deliver an opinion upon any public question, such opinion was dictated by the purest motives, and was therefore entitled to all the weight which it could derive from his great expe-

rience. Now, if he at all recollected the opinion delivered by Sir William Curtis on this subject, it was exactly the reverse of that attributed to him by the Worthy Alderman. Sir William, as he (the Lord Mayor) understood him, had delivered it as his opinion, that it would be an extremely dangerous and delicate matter to make any alteration in the present system, declaring it to be his opinion, that to lay open the trade, would be to have a baker's shop at every door. The Worthy Alderman had stated that the price of flour was 5s. on an average more than that of wheat, and he agreed that there was a hardship in this, if a remedy could be provided for the evil; but what would the Court say when informed, that instead of 5s. per sack the difference was nearer 20s.? Was not this, then, he asked, a crying evil, and should it be lightly esteemed because it fell in a peculiar degree on the lower and poorer orders of the community? Ought such a thing as this to pass unnoticed? The care of attending to the interests of the Citizens of London in general belonged to that Court; would they not, then, investigate the matter, and see if they could not point out a remedy? His Lordship presumed the Court would not deem this too much to be undertaken by them, in the hope that they might bring about a great public good. If, on investigation they found that nothing could be effected by their deliberations, it was then time enough to despair, and like men to state, that with all their exertions they were sorry to find they could do no good. The Worthy Alderman (Wood) had said that the flour was sent up to the factor in town to be sold for what it would bring. It would be well if this were so; but his Lordship could assure the Court that the fact was quite otherwise. He himself had been shewn letters by some of the farmers in the country, which they had received from their factors in town, advising them not to send up their flour to market but in certain small quantities, and at a certain fixed price. As the law was at present interpreted, the second clause in the Act of Parliament was rendered entirely nugatory (*applauses below the Bar*).

Mr. SAMUEL DIXON spoke to order. If such conduct on the part of strangers below the Bar was repeated, he should move, however irksome might be the task, that strangers be excluded.

Mr. WHITE argued, that the speech of the Worthy Alderman (Wood) was nothing but an attack upon the conduct of the

Lord Mayor, without having any thing to do with the question before the Court. He was satisfied from what he himself knew, that the Honourable Mover had stated nothing but facts; and he was for the motion, seeing no evil that could result from it—whilst it might produce much good.

MR. ALDERMAN WOOD declared that he only meant to protect the character and conduct of the Court of Aldermen, who had never been consulted on this subject, and with whom, if any such measure were necessary to be taken, that measure ought to have originated. It had never, he could refer it to all who knew him, been any part of his character to take from the poor, or to think that their interests ought to be neglected. He had always wished to give to the poor rather than to take from them, and had always been the first to promote inquiries which had any tendency to promote their advantage. He should oppose the present Motion, however, because he thought it would be more for the public interest to pass an Amendment, declaring the expediency of doing away the Assize of Bread entirely. As an illustration of the advantage to be thence derived, he referred to the case of a baker at Shoreditch, who for the last fifteen years had carried on a very extensive business, selling his bread at a penny or three half-pence a quartern loaf under the assize, which he was enabled to do by going to the country markets, and there purchasing cheaper than he could do in London. In this way, too, he had realized a fortune far greater than the generality of bakers.

THE LORD MAYOR declared that he had not been wanting in respect to the Upper Court, and called on Mr. Alderman Wood to point out in what respect he had done so. As to the present Requisition it had not originated with him, nor had he any thing to do with it.

MR. ALDERMAN WOOD repeated, the Court of Aldermen had not been consulted. In that respect, he said, they had not been handsomely treated.

MR. QUIN declared himself quite at a loss to conceive by what possibility the Court could come to such a Resolution as that now proposed for their adoption, without taking time to consider the various relations of the subject, and the consequences to which such a Resolution might lead. It had been reserved for his Honourable Friend, the framer of the present motion, all at once to make stupendous discoveries, which had eluded the grasp of the greatest

statesmen of this Country, of France, and even of ancient Greece and Rome, who had always, with the utmost caution, and even with a sort of dread, touched that important article, bread,—which was the test by which to fix the standard of every other article and commodity whatever. He begged to recal to the recollection of the Court, the dilemma in which this country had been placed in the year 1795, and also in the year 1800. In the year 1795, there was an actual famine, and yet the Legislature never dared to interfere to the effect of lowering the price of bread, because that could have had no other effect than to produce additional calamities. What the Legislature then did, fully shewed the fallacy of resorting to artificial means on such a subject. They confined their interference to a very few points. They prohibited the exportation of grain of all kinds; they suspended distillation from grain; and they ordered premiums to be paid for the importation of grain. They added, however, another measure as fatal as could well be adopted—they became their own agents for the purchase of grain—tampering with that which ought to be free as air. If a Government were to erect granaries, and to expect that, by filling them with grain, they could keep down the price of grain, the measure would fail. In the year 1800 there was also a famine felt, during which year Alderman Combe was Lord Mayor, and acted with an energy which would long be remembered to his honour, and by the exertion of which he saved the lives of many of his fellow-citizens. The Court were now called on, by the motion of his worthy Friend, to declare what the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and the experience of ages, had failed in reconciling as consistent with sound policy. He would ask his Worthy Friend where were his grounds for declaring a particular class of men, malefactors in regard to their fellow-citizens. That the price of bread had not fallen in the same degree it might have been expected to do, he agreed; but this probably might be accounted for in the rise of other articles, such as rents, the price of labour, &c.

MR. MOORE concurred in the general opinion that the bakers were injured, and that the present high price of bread was not attributable to them. Something, however, he thought, should be done, without going the length of doing away the assize of bread altogether. With this view he should propose as an amendment—"That a Com-



“mittee be appointed, consisting of all the Aldermen and a Common Councilman from each Ward, to take into consideration the present high price of bread, and also to consider if any, and what better means can be adopted for supplying the city of London with bread, and to report thereon.”

Mr. SAMUEL DIXON seconded this Motion. He was of opinion the Committee would not be able to effect any good; but as the Court had gone so far, he thought they ought not to stop short of the appointment of a Committee, to see what could be done. The public would now naturally expect, after the subject was brought before the Court, that they should do their best.

Mr. Alderman BRYDGES said a few words, which were quite inaudible under the bar.

Mr. Alderman ATKINS expressed his sorrow at hearing a Motion of this kind introduced in such a way as to calumniate indiscriminately so respectable a body of men as those connected with the meal and corn trade of London. To have due respect paid to ourselves, the only proper way was to do justice to all. It would be going too far in that Court to think that they were prepared all at once satisfactorily to dispose of a subject which had for centuries occupied the attention, and received contradictory decisions from our Legislators. Some were of opinion that the assize was the only mode of settling the price of bread; while others said, “Let us have it by open competition.” If this was a question regarding a common trade, he should at once fall in with this latter idea of the subject; but viewing it as a question of so important a nature, that the very existence of the citizens of London depended upon it, he could not consent to the abandonment of all control over it. It could not be suspected that the Magistrates of the city of London would not wish to do justice to all parties. He had no doubt that, generally speaking, there was a respect felt for the Magistrates; and that it would continue rather to afford satisfaction, that as between the dealer and the public there was an appeal to the Magistrates. Should the Court then, at once, abandon that check upon the dealer which had been thought necessary to be adopted by wise and enlightened men who had gone before them? Let the subject be looked to in all its bearings, and if any part would admit of amendment, let such amendment be suggested; particularly, let the various Acts be consolidated into one,

in such a way as shall make the subject clear and distinct, without the necessity of farther reference, to the most ordinary capacity. He deprecated the idea of general calumny, or making a man feel regret or shame at being a meal-man. If such feelings were encouraged, there would soon not be a meal-man to be found in the country. There were as good men, and as honourable, in that as in any other profession, and unfortunately, experience taught us that there were rogues in all. While the Court, however, held themselves as they ought to do, endeavouring to serve the public, but not accusing one set of men, or another, of practices of which, for any thing that appeared before the Court, they might be innocent, the public would feel gratified by their labours.

It was then agreed that the original motion should stand amended by the introduction of the words proposed by Mr. Moore, and, so amended, be put as an original motion.

Mr. SLADE was of opinion the motion did not go far enough. The question was, whether the measure of fixing an assize was or was not a good measure? When we look to other countries, where there was no assize, and where corn was infinitely cheaper; when we looked even to particular districts of this country where no assize was fixed, and found that there the bread was considerably cheaper than it was in London, where the assize prevailed, it became a question of serious consideration, whether the fixing of an assize was or was not a good measure. He should, therefore, preliminary to the Resolution now before the Court, move that a Committee be appointed to consider, between this and the meeting of Parliament, whether or not the fixing of an assize for regulating the price of bread be, or be not, the best measure that can be adopted on that subject. This would be like cutting the Gordian knot, looking in the face a subject we seemed afraid to meet.

Mr. S. DIXON recommended, that instead of being a preliminary Resolution, the matter now suggested should be one of the considerations referred to the Committee.

Mr. MOORE submitted, that what was now suggested came within the terms of his motion.

Mr. JUDKINS stated that if the assize had been set during the whole 45 weeks the present Lord Mayor had been in office by the price of wheat instead of the price of flour, it would have been greatly in favour of

the baker, and against the public; as during 33 of those weeks, it would have been against the public, and in their favour only by 9 weeks, it being equal during the remaining three weeks. No such combination as had been spoken of existed among the dealers in meal, nor could such a combination be effectual. The reasons which caused the price of flour to remain so high were easily explicable, without such a supposition. From the state of the weather being so favourable for the out-door operations of agriculture, the farmer had not been enabled to apply any quantity of hands to thrashing. The public were little acquainted with the great quantity of corn (amounting to 1-10 of the whole produce) which was necessary for seed, and which must be thrashed out before any considerable quantity could be sent to market. Many farmers, too, were of opinion, that the present state of the market was convulsive, and kept back the produce of their lands in an expectation of a rise.

Mr. Alderman BIRCH wished to caution the Court and the members of the Committee against meddling with the assize, which had existed with such happy effects for 700 years, and which had remained inviolate in the most urgent times, because it secured the public peace, and guaranteed to the dealers in bread, a certain but moderate profit. The fact which a worthy Alderman (Wood) had mentioned of a baker in Shoreditch, selling under the assize, was conclusive that this institution did not exclude competition, for a hundred other bakers might, if they found their advantage in it, act as this man had done.

Mr. SLADE withdrew his former Amendment, and proposed a new one, "that the subject be referred to the Corn and Coals Committee."

Mr. MOORE said, that the existing Committees had in general quite enough business on their hands.

Mr. SLADE replied, that the Corn and Coals Committee had very little to do.

The Amendment was then put and negatived, and the original motion carried unanimously. After which the Committee was appointed, and the Court adjourned.

Mr. GRIFFITHS was of opinion, that the bakers were quite guiltless of any share in keeping up the price of bread. There was a word he had used which he wished to withdraw, because next to acting rightly, the most meritorious line of conduct was to acknowledge an offence. He had used the words "to rob," for which he was sorry, though convinced that in some quarter or other a combination did exist.

## OFFICIAL PAPERS.

### BULLETINS OF THE CROWN PRINCE.

(Continued from page 448.)

he will fall in with the first Prussian troops. In his march, he made six Polish officers prisoners, whom he brought with him: he joined the head quarters of his Serene Highness without the loss of a man. Two of his Cossacks were wounded by sabres.

#### Head-quarters at Rodigke, Sept. 4.

The Crown Prince removed his head-quarters to Buchlaoltz on the 30th August, on the 31st to Treuenbreitzen, and yesterday to this place.—Luckau is one of those points on the frontiers of Saxony which the enemy had fortified with the greatest assiduity during the Armistice. He reckoned upon being able to defend it longer, and did not expect to see us there so soon. We give the capitulation of this place afterwards. The Crown Prince has ordered that the neighbouring mountain shall be fortified; 600 men are at work on it. The suburbs will be razed; and by this means the garrison of Luckau will be able to defend itself.—The ground, which is very much broken, to some leagues from Wittenburg, favoured the enemy's retreat, and prevented the light cavalry from acting; he has, notwithstanding, been forced from time to time in his different positions.—On the 30th August, Gen. Winzingerode had his head-quarters at Niemeck. General Blucher had his at Treuenbreitzen on the 30th August, and on the 1st September at Frohnsdorf.—On the 2d Sept. this General's corps advanced into the positions of Schwolbeck and Feldhum, his advanced guard being at Morzahn.—The enemy garrisoned Kropstadt, but defiled during the night, and at break of day his rear-guard commenced its retreat. General Borstell pursued him as far as Thiesen. The enemy commenced a heavy cannonade and fire of musketry to cover this position; but General Borstell's advanced posts sustained themselves before the defiles of Kopping, two thousand paces from Thussen; the division of Colonel Krafft ascended the heights of Kropstadt, to support General Borstell. At the same time, General Dobschutz made himself master of the heights of the town of Zahne. His communication with General Borstell was kept up by the post of Wollersdorff, of which Major Beyer had taken possession. The rest of General Bulow's corps took position at Marzaleau.—The Prussian division, under the command of Colonel Krafft,



has principally contributed to the success of the affair at Gros-Beren, and its commander has distinguished himself by his intrepidity. The Prince of Hesse Homberg's corps has likewise taken an active share in the engagements which took place, and the Prince has, on every occasion, given proofs of his valour and activity. The enemy being hard pressed on his left flank, by the Generals Woronzoff, Grouk, and Czernitscheff, made some attempts from the side of Caswiz, but was always repulsed with loss. — On the 3d of Sept. Lieutenant-Colonel Zzbacha was detached by General Woronzoff to take possession of a wood near Schmilkendorff, and executed his orders with good success. Being afterwards surrounded by the enemy, with four times his number, he still faced them, and cleared his way in good order, and with very little loss. Schmilkendorff was again garrisoned by General Woronzoff. — The French corps d'armée, which had advanced to Schwerin, still remained there on the 2d inst.; it has detached the Danish division to Gadebusch, to cover his rear. General Tettenborn continued to disturb the enemy's communications, and alarm his advanced posts. He took, near Gadebusch, a transport of 40 waggons, with provisions and ammunition, after having killed and dispersed its escort. The consequences of the victory gained by Gen. Blucher, on the 26th, on the Katsbach, are decisive. The result of that action, on the 30th, amounted to more than 14,000 prisoners, 80 pieces of artillery, and 300 ammunition waggons. — The whole French division of Gen. Pulhod, on the 29th inst. laid down their arms at Lowenberg, with the exception of 3 or 400 men, who threw themselves into the Bober. General Blucher, on the 30th August, had his head-quarters at Holstein, near Lowenberg, and continued briskly in pursuit of the enemy. General Bennigsen, with his corps d'armée, arrived at Breslaw on the 30th, from whence he proceeded to Leignitz, marching on the same line with Gen. Blucher.

*Head-quarters, Treuenbitzen, Sept. 1.*

His Royal Highness removed his head-quarters to Buchholtz on the 30th August, from whence it was shifted here yesterday at eight o'clock in the morning. — The enemy had possession of the town of Marzahn, Selwabeck, Eckmansdorff, and Feldhum. Cannon shots were yesterday discharged between him and our reconnoitring corps. Gen. Baron Adlercreutz was de-

tached by his Royal Highness to view the enemy's position, and rode forward, accompanied by Gen. Baron Tawast, within 400 paces of his batteries. — The united army is collected together. The Prussian and Russian van-guards are in pursuit of the enemy on the road to Wittenberg. A corps of Swedish troops, composed of Morner's regiment of hussars, 2 battalions of yagers, and 4 pieces of artillery, under the command of Adjutant-General Baron Cederstrom, is joined with the Russian vanguard; General Czernicheff's and Colonel Breudel's light troops swarm about the enemy. The Generals Tauenzien and Herschfeldt direct their motions by those of the army, and are in connexion with it. — The Prince of Eckmuhl still continued in his position near Schwerin, on the 28th August. His Royal Highness has this day sent off Colonel Bjousturna, with a flag of truce to the French advanced posts, to deliver the Commandant of Luckau's capitulation.

**FRENCH PAPERS.**

*Paris, Sept. 19.*—Her Majesty the Empress Queen and Regent has received the following intelligence from the army, dated the 7th of September:—

“The Duke of Reggio, with the 12th, 7th, and 4th corps, marched on the 23d August upon Berlin. He ordered the village of Thebbin, defended by the enemy's army, to be attacked, and forced it. He continued his movement. — On the 24th August, the 7th corps not having succeeded in the battle of Gros Beeren, the Duke of Reggio marched upon Wittenberg. — On the 8th September the Prince of Moskwa took the command of the army, and marched upon Interburg. On the 5th he attacked and defeated Tauentzien; but on the 6th he was attacked on his march by Gen. Bulow. Some charges of cavalry on his rear threw disorder among his parks. He was obliged to retire upon Torgau. He lost 8,000 men killed, wounded, or prisoners, and 12 pieces of cannon. The enemy's loss must also have been very great.”

*Report from the Prince of Moskwa.*

“Sire,—The twelfth corps d'armée attacked the enemy on the 5th, and drove him with great vigour beyond Seyda; we took three flags, several pieces of cannon, and some hundred prisoners; the field of battle was covered with the enemy's dead. — The following day, the 6th, the fourth

corps debouched at eight in the morning by Niendorf and Juterboch; the enemy held the heights in the rear of Dennewitz. The seventh corps marched upon Rohrbeck, and the 12th upon Ohna; I thus refused my left, and was in a condition to support the fourth corps, which, in place of attacking, was to turn Juterboch by its right, to mask the movement which I wished to make upon Dahma, and upon which I had determined, by the certainty that the whole of the enemy's army was debouching in great haste upon Dennewitz. The enemy's advanced guard was overthrown by General Morand's division, which performed prodigies of valour. General Lorgis's division of light cavalry indiscreetly engaged (*mal engagée*), and brought back in disorder, caused some confusion, which the good countenance of the infantry soon corrected. The enemy being rapidly reinforced, the whole of the fourth corps found itself engaged. The seventh, which had been expected, at last arrived, and I ordered General Regnier to briskly charge the enemy's right, whilst General Morand should renew his attack; this general charge had much success; the enemy had just lost much ground; Durette's division conducted itself well; sixty pieces of artillery fired grape-shot upon the enemy's troops, who were in disorder in the hollow ground between Golsdorf and Wilmersdorf; in short, the 12th corps, which entered briskly into action, drove the enemy's right upon his centre, separated from his left by the fourth corps. At this moment the battle was gained; but two divisions of the seventh corps failed, and the whole of that corps suddenly falling back, carrying part of the 12th with it, changed the state of things. —The enemy succeeded in throwing his masses between the fourth and 12th corps, which still fought with the greatest fury. I insensibly brought the fourth from the right of the 12th. The artillery from the position placed upon the heights between the Ohna and Dennewitz, filled the interval, and I then ordered a retreat; the fourth corps effected it in good order upon Dahma, and the seventh and 12th marched upon Schweinitz. This morning the enemy, in number from 3 to 4,000 infantry, with cannon and 120 horse, coming from Luckau, vehemently attacked Dahma. The 23d regiment of the line marched against him, and forced him to precipitately retire. The bridge of Herzberg upon the Elbe has been burnt. We have preserved two others, one above and one below that town. To-

morrow the fourth corps, with a division of light cavalry, will proceed from Herzberg to Torgau. The seventh and 12th corps, and two other divisions of cavalry, will occupy positions upon Torgau. The loss suffered yesterday is about 8,000 men and 12 pieces of cannon; that of the enemy must have been as considerable, the artillery of the different corps having consumed a great part of their ammunition. We had many prisoners in our power, but they disappeared during the night-march. —I am, with the most profound respect, Sire, your Majesty's very obedient and very humble servant and faithful subject,

(Signed) The PRINCE of MOSKWA.  
"Torgau, 7th Sept. 1813."

Paris, Sept. 19.—Her Majesty the Empress and Queen has received the following intelligence from the army, of the 11th September:—

"The enemy's grand army, beaten at Dresden, took refuge in Bohemia. Informed that the Emperor had gone to Silesia, the Allies assembled a corps of 80,000 men, composed of Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, and on the 5th marched upon Hottendorf; the 6th upon Gieshubel; and the 7th on Pirna; on the 8th at noon the Emperor proceeded to Dohna, ordered Marshal St. Cyr to attack the enemy's advanced guard, which was driven by Gen. Bonnet from the heights of Dohna. During the night the French were upon the camp at Pirna. —On the 9th the French army marched upon Borna and Fustenwalde. The Emperor's head-quarters were at Liebstadt. —On the 10th Marshal St. Cyr marched from the village of Furstenwalde upon the Geyersberg, which commands the Bohemian plain. General Bonnet, with the 43d division, descended into the plain near Toplitz. The enemy's army, which endeavoured to rally after having called all its detachments from Saxony, was seen. If the debouch from the Gayesberg had been practicable for artillery, that army would have been attacked in flank during its march, but all the efforts made to get the cannon down were ineffectual. —General Ornano debouched upon the heights of Peterswalde, whilst General Dumonceau arrived there by Hottendorf. We have made some hundreds of prisoners, of which several are officers. The enemy constantly avoided battle, and precipitately retired in all directions. —On the 11th the Emperor returned to Dresden."



THE LONDON GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY,  
Tuesday, Sept. 21.

*Foreign Office, Sept. 21, 1813.*

Dispatches, of which the following are copies, have been received by Viscount Castlereagh, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, from Lieutenant-General the Honourable Sir Charles Stewart, K. B. His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the King of Prussia, dated the 27th, 29th, 30th, and 31st of August.

*Head-quarters of His Majesty the King of Prussia, Zehista, Aug. 27, 1813.*

My Lord,—My last dispatches will have acquainted your Lordship of the determination of the Allied Armies to debouche from Bohemia by the several passes into Saxony, and enter on immediate offensive operations in flank and rear of the enemy, if he still maintained his forward positions in Lusatia, and remained on the right bank of the Elbe. While the main Russian army, under General Barclay de Tolly, including the corps of Witgenstein and Miloradovitch, and the Prussian corps of General Kleist, together with the whole of the Austrian army, were to act offensively from Bohemia, under the chief command of Prince Schwartzenergh. Gen. Blucher's corps d'armée, composed of a division of Prussians, under Lieutenant-Gen. d'Yorck, and General Sacken's and General Langeron's Russian divisions, were to move from Silesia on Lusatia, and threaten the enemy in front. General Blucher was to avoid engaging in any general action, especially against superior numbers. In conformity with these intentions General Blucher advanced in three columns on the 20th from Leignitz, Goldenberg, and Jauer, on Buntzlau and Lowenberg; General Sacken's corps moved on the right on Buntzlau, and Gen. d'Yorck's on the centre, and Gen. Langeron's on the left. The enemy abandoned Buntzlau, destroyed their works, and blew up a magazine of powder there; and Gen. Blucher's force advanced to the Bober, where they were attacked on the 21st by the enemy, who moved in great force on Buntzlau, Lowenberg, and Laun, and a very serious affair took place. It is reported Buonaparté commanded in person, and that he presented one hundred and ten thousand men to General Blucher. The allied troops contested the ground with great bravery, but as General Blucher had received orders to avoid a general engage-

ment, he withdrew in the best order to Haynau, Pilgramsdorf, Hirshberg, and behind the Katzbach; where his troops were at the date of the last accounts. The loss of General Blucher in this affair is reported to be near two thousand men. He took, however, several prisoners. The enemy suffered considerably.—The grand armies on the side of Bohemia, commenced passing the frontiers on the 20th and 21st; Count Witgenstein's and General Kleist's columns, by the passes of Peterswalde; the Austrians by Komotaw. On the 22d, Count Witgenstein's corps fell in with the enemy, and had a very considerable encounter with them near Berghishabel and Zehista.—The enemy met the allies on the frontiers, and have been beaten back from all their positions, towards Dresden, although they endeavoured unsuccessfully to defend every inch of ground.—The different columns of the allied armies were to debouche from the mountains and passes, at such concerted periods as would probably have operated fatally upon the enemy, if the arrangement, as planned, had been completely carried into effect; but the eagerness of the troops to push on and engage, brought the right corps into action on the morning of the 22d. The French were commanded by General Gouvion St. Cyr (who is newly arrived, and come up with the army from Wurtzburg), and their force consisted of upwards of 15,000 men; they were supported by their troops from Konigstein, and by those in the camp at Liebenstein, which amount at least to 6,000 men, under General Bonnet. After a very sharp action, Count Witgenstein drove the enemy from all points, took three or four hundred prisoners, besides a vast number of killed and wounded. The loss of the Allies was not severe.—The enemy after this action retired into Konigstein, his entrenched camp at Liebenstein, and also into the various works he has thrown up round Dresden. The Allies have pressed forwards on him on every side, and the Grand Armies are now encircling Dresden.—On the 26th, the hussar regiment of Grodno, of Count Witgenstein's corps, had a very brisk engagement close to Dresden, in which they took four guns and one howitzer. The advanced guards of the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians encamped this night on the heights above Dresden, between Nauslitz and Ischernitz.—On the 27th, in the morning, the enemy abandoned the ground in advance of Dresden which they occupied, called the Grossen Garten, and



withdrew into the suburbs and their different works. I have thus given your Lordship a general outline of operations up to this period; every hour is big with events. No official reports are made out, so I fear my details in many points may be imperfect. Perhaps the history of war does not afford a period where two great armies stand committed to such bold operations. —I have much pleasure in reporting to your Lordship, that two Westphalian regiments of hussars, commanded by Colonel Hammerstein, have come over from the enemy, and are most eager to be ranged in battle against them, to take their revenge for the misery they have entailed upon this country. —I have the honour to be, &c.

CHARLES STEWART, Lieut.-Gen.

*Head-quarters of his Imperial Majesty,  
the Emperor of Russia, Allenberg,  
Aug. 29, 1813.*

My Lord,—The enemy having abandoned the ground surrounding Dresden, called the Grossen Garten, and having withdrawn into their works, and into the suburbs of the town on the morning of the 27th, it was deemed expedient to make an attack with a large force upon the place, the possession of which became of considerable importance. Count Witgenstein's and General Kleist's light troops, on the right of the town, had sustained, during the morning of the 27th, in the attack of the gardens, some loss; and, indeed, the enemy had so much improved by art, the defences around the town, that it was evidently an enterprise of considerable difficulty to carry it. —The troops moved to the assault at four o'clock in the evening; Count Witgenstein's corps, in three columns, on the right of the Grossen Garten: General Kleist moved one column of attack through these gardens, and two on the left. His left column was headed by Prince Augustus of Prussia; three divisions of Austrians on the left of the town, under the immediate direction of Count Colloredo, and Prince Maurice, of Lichtenstein, joined the Prussians on their left; the Prussians forming the centre attack. A tremendous cannonade commenced the operation; the batteries being planted in a circular form round the town, the effect was magnificent; the fine buildings in Dresden were soon enveloped in smoke, and the troops moved forward in the most perfect order to the assault. They approached on all sides close to the town. The Austrians took an advanced redoubt

with eight guns, in the most undaunted and gallant manner. I never saw troops behave more conspicuously; the work was of the strongest kind, not above sixty yards from the main wall, and it was flanked by cross fires of musketry from the various loop-holes that were made in every part from projecting buildings; but nothing could surpass the gallantry with which it was stormed: the enemy fled from it only to shelter themselves behind new defences, manning the thick walls of the town, in which it was impossible, without a long and continued fire of heavy artillery, to make breaches. —The enemy, with the aid of those means which a strong town affords of resistance, held the troops in check who had so gallantly carried and entered the out-works. The night was fast approaching, and the enemy now attempted to make a sortie with a considerable force of all his guards, at least amounting to thirty thousand, to separate the allied troops, and take one wing in flank and rear. This was immediately perceived, and as it appeared evident that it was not practicable to carry the place that night, orders were sent to draw off the troops, and they returned to their several encampments. Prince Maurice of Lichtenstein made an admirable disposition on the side where the enemy made their sortie, by which all disorder was avoided. This enterprise, in proportion to its being of moment, was one of great difficulty; no troops could signalize themselves more, and in my humble opinion, if it had been physically possible to carry the place under the circumstances, they would have accomplished it. But there were no breaches for the troops to enter, and the artillery, although brought up at the close of the evening to near one hundred paces of the wall, were not able to batter it, or make an impression. —From the best calculation I can make, I should estimate the loss of the Allies at under 4,000 men in this attack. The Austrians chiefly suffered. —The sortie of the enemy was a prelude to a more general battle, which took place on the following morning, the 28th. Buonaparté had arrived in Dresden from that part of his army in Lusatia on the night of the 22d, and having a very large force in Dresden, at least 150,000 men, he appears to have determined on attacking the Allies, who occupied a very extended position on the heights surrounding it. —The enemy had great advantages in their disposition for attack: Dresden, lined with guns, was in their rear; their communica-

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tions were not intersected; if they made an impression, they could pursue it; if they failed, they could withdraw in security, and our troops could not follow them under the guns of the place. One of the worst days that ever was seen, added materially to the difficulties of the Allies, who had arrived, by rapid marches, through bad roads and defiles, at their positions, and whose supplies of every kind it was difficult, if not impossible, to get up. Availing himself of the advantages above stated, Buonaparté displayed an immense number of pieces of artillery; and heavy cannonading on both sides formed the chief feature of the battle. Charges in various points were made, both with the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian cavalry, and they distinguished themselves highly; but the main bodies of the infantry in both armies did not come in contact. The weather was so hazy, and the rain so incessant, that the action was sustained at all points under the heaviest disadvantages. — Towards the middle of the day a catastrophe occurred which awakened more than ordinary sensibility and regret throughout the Allied Army; General Moreau, in earnest conversation with the Emperor of Russia on the operations, had both his legs carried off by a cannon shot, the ball going through his horse. An equal loss both to the good cause, and to the profession of arms. It is impossible not deeply to lament his fate; he is still alive. — The enemy continued his efforts on the position of the Allies, till finding he could make no impression, the action ceased. — The battle may have cost us six or seven thousand men. The enemy must have suffered more; in one charge of Russian cavalry against infantry and a battery, a great number of prisoners were taken, though the guns were not brought off. — I have already detailed to your Lordship the general difficulties in which the Allied Army was placed by the large force opposed to them, and by the opinion that Buonaparté would pass a considerable body of troops across the Elbe at Königstein and Pirna, to possess himself of the passes in our rear. The orders for retiring to the Allied Army were issued on the evening of the 28th, and the army is now in march in different columns. — It is impossible not to lament that so fine and so numerous an army, perfectly entire in all its parts, should be under the necessity, having once advanced, of making a retrograde step, as miscalculations may be made on the event, and the enemy may suppose he has gained an

advantage; I can only pledge myself to your Lordship, that the army is as eager as ever to meet the enemy, and the same determined spirit exists, though a partial change of operations may be deemed necessary. — The enemy's force was not diminished on the side of Lusatia up to the 23d, for his efforts on the Elbe, as he attacked General Blücher again in great force on that day, who retired upon Jauer. On the 24th, however, he advanced again, the enemy having fallen back, which would indicate his bringing more forces into Bohemia. — The Austrian corps of Gen. Neuberg has also advanced in the direction of Zittau. I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) CHAS. STEWART, Lieut.-Gen.

*Toplitz, Aug. 30, 1813.*

My Lord, — Since my dispatch of yesterday's date, I have to acquaint your Lordship, that a very brilliant action has taken place this day on the road from Toplitz towards Peterswalde, about two German miles from the former place. It appears that the Russian column, under Count Ostermann, which was to retire by the pass of Osterswalde, found the enemy, who had actually crossed the Elbe at Pirna and Königstein, had possession of the pass in the mountains, and they were obliged most gallantly to force their way through with the bayonet. They then remained in action with the enemy till late in the evening; and having been reinforced by the reserves of the Russian guards, cavalry and infantry, the former, under his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Constantine, who were sent rapidly to their support. This body of troops, consisting of about 8,000 men, held in check, during the day, two corps and one division of the French army, under Generals Vandamme and Bertrand, amounting at least to 30,000 men. I should do his Imperial Majesty's guards injustice if I attempted to describe the admiration I felt at their valour and signal bravery. The light cavalry of the guard, consisting of the Polonese and dragoon regiments, charged columns of infantry in the highest style. General Diebztzsch, an officer of great merit, particularly distinguished himself; Prince Galitzin in like manner. He was wounded in the attack. Count Ostermann, towards the close of the day, had his arm carried off by a cannon shot; the General commanding the Cuirassiers of St. George was also wounded. — The importance of the bravery displayed by these troops is highly augmented, when it is considered,

that had they not held their ground, the columns of the army and artillery retiring by Altenberg, which were delayed by the bad roads, must have been greatly endangered.

—His Prussian Majesty was at Toplitz when the enemy made their rapid advance by Peterswalde, and made the most able dispositions to reinforce Count Ostermann, and by his coolness and personal exertions, preserved order and regularity, which even the momentary idea of the enemy's getting in the rear is apt to endanger. The admirable conduct of this Sovereign on all occasions is the theme of universal praise. The corps of Count Ostermann lost three thousand men in this day's action *hors de combat*.—The French loss may be averaged at double. General Vandamme's corps suffered immensely. The cavalry of the Russian guard took two standards and three or four hundred prisoners.—The enemy followed our rear-guard during the day, on the Dippoldswalde road, and they met with a considerable check from the rear-guard, commanded by the Austrian General Hardegg.—I hope your Lordship will excuse the hurry with which this is written, and will make allowances, as the period and continued movements and operations prevent much accuracy.—I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) CHAS. STEWART, Lieut. Gen.

Toplitz, Aug. 31, 1813.

My Lord,—The brilliant and well contested action of the 30th, in which the Prussian guards covered themselves with glory, has been followed up by a very general and decisive victory over that part of the enemy's army which had advanced from Königstein and Pirna, on the great chaussee leading from Peterswalde to Toplitz. It became of the utmost importance to make this attack, not only to give time for those columns of the army to fall back, which were still retiring upon the Altenberg and Dippoldswalde road, but at the same time to extricate the corps under General Kleist, which had not disengaged itself from the mountains.—The enemy had the advantage, in pushing rapidly forward upon our right flank, of a good line of road; whereas the columns of the Allied Army, although retiring by shorter lines, were impeded not only by the unfavourable state of the wea-

ther, but by almost impassable roads.—

A great proportion of the artillery train and baggage of the Allied Army had not yet got clear of the mountains, when the enemy had arrived at Hollendorf and Kulm, about three German miles distant from Toplitz, the scene where the action took place.—The attack being determined upon, the following disposition of the troops, destined for that purpose, was immediately made. Six thousand Russian grenadiers, two thousand infantry, and four thousand cavalry, under the immediate orders of General Miloradovitch, together with twelve thousand Austrians, under Count Coloredo and General Bianchi, commenced the action; the remainder of the troops collected for this enterprise being formed in columns of reserve upon the adjacent plain.—The village of Kulm is situated at the bottom of a range of mountains which forms an almost impregnable barrier between Saxony and Bohemia; from this point branches off two distinct ranges of mountain, east and west; between these ranges the ground is generally flat, affording, however, in some places good defensible positions. Upon this ground, immediately fronting the village of Kulm, the enemy collected a strong force of infantry, with a great portion of artillery; a galling fire was kept up incessantly from this point upon the Russians under General Miloradovitch.—Such was the strength of the adjacent heights of Kulm, and so ably had the enemy disposed of their force for its defence, that it was judged more expedient to make the principal attack by the right, in consequence of which the Austrian infantry were directed to move along the high ground upon the right, while the Russian guards and infantry were to commence their attack upon the left, so soon as the Austrians were sufficiently advanced. While these movements were executing, the corps of General Kleist, which had not been disengaged from the mountains, appeared in the enemy's rear, descending the road by which the enemy were to retire in case of need. On all sides the attack commenced in the most vigorous and decisive manner. The enemy's left were turned by the distinguished bravery and good conduct of the Austrians under Count Coloredo,

(To be continued.)

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